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TELEGRAM

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ICA-15 DODE-00 H-02 IO-15 NEA-07 NSC-05 NSAE-00
HA-06 PM-07 PA-02 SP-02 SPRS-02 /118 W
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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3732
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 12065:N/A

TAGS: SREF, AF, PA, UNHCR

SUBJ: PRESS ARTICLE ON INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AID FOR
AFGHANS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE IN JANUARY 26
INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE BY EDWARD GIRARDET IN
PARIS.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

HEADLINES:

- RUSSIA SAID TO USE STARVATION AS ISOLATION TACTIC
- INTERNATIONAL AID ORGANIZATIONS NEGLECT DIRECT
RELIEF TO AFGHANS

3. THERE ARE NOW ROUGHLY 1.5 MILLION AFGHAN REFUGEES IN
PAKISTANI CAMPS, VILLAGES AND TOWNS. AN ADDITIONAL
300,000 ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SOUGHT ASYLUM ALONG THE AFGHAN
FRONTIER IN IRAN.

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IF THE PRESENT RATE OF THOSE FLEEING WAR, HUNGER AND

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REPRESSION IN SOVIET-OCCUPIED AFGHANISTAN CONTINUES. INTERNATIONAL RELIEF OFFICIALS EXPECT THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN TO TOP 2 MILLION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, GIVING PAKISTAN THE TRAGIC HONOR OF HOSTING THE WORLD'S LARGEST SINGLE REFUGEE POPULATION.

4. APPEALS BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES AND THE ISLAMABAD REGIME HAVE GALVANIZED MANY GOVERNMENTS AND RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS INTO SEEKING TO ALLEVIATE THIS STILL URGENT, AND IN PART DESPERATE REFUGEE PROBLEM. LAST YEAR, WELL OVER DOLS 80 MILLION WORTH OF EMERGENCY FOOD, MEDICINE, CLOTHING AND TENTS WERE MADE AVAILABLE.

BUT LITTLE HAS BEEN DONE TO RELIEVE THE PLIGHT OF MILLIONS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN INSIDE AFGHANISTHE ONSET OF THE REGION'S HARSH WINTER.

IN CERTAIN AREAS, NOTABLY THE NORTHEAST AND THE PROVINCES BORDERING PAKISTAN, SOVIET AND AFGHAN GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE RUTHLESSLY BOMBED OR MINED VILLAGES, IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, FIELDS AND FOOT-PATHS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DENY THE INSURGENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES SHELTER AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY TO GROW FOOD.

ENFORCED STARVATION

5. ACCORDING TO FRENCH AND U.S. SOURCES RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE INTERIOR, THE RUSSIANS HAVE EMBARKED ON A POLICY OF ENFORCED STARVATION AS A MAJOR TACTIC TO ISOLATE RESISTANCE GROUPS. REPORTS INDICATE, FOR
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EXAMPLE, THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ENCIRCLED THE QUASI-AUTONOMOUS, INSURGENT-HELD HAZARAJAT IN CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN AND ARE TRYING TO SEAL IT OFF FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

"FOOD IS ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN AFGHANISTAN," OBSERVED DR. CLAUDE MALHURET OF MEDICINS SANS FRONTIERE, ONE OF THE SEVERAL FRENCH RELIEF GROUPS INVOLVED IN BRINGING FOOD AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO BELEAGUERED REGIONS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN." IN MANY AREAS THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO CULTIVATE THE LAND. THERE IS SEVERE

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MA. NUTRITION. PEOPLE ARE ONLY BARELY SURVIVING".

DOCTORS ARE FEW OR NON-EXISTENT. THE NEAREST MEDICAL CARE FOR MANY AFGHANS, WHETHER ACTIVE COMBATANTS OR CIVILIANS, REMAINS IN PAKISTAN, OFTEN AN ARDUOUS THREE OR FOUR-DAY JOURNEY IN GOOD WEATHER CONDITIONS BUT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE WHEN THE 120-000 MOUNTAIN PASSES ARE BLOCKED WITH SNOW.

6. BY BOMBING SETTLEMENTS AND DROPPING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PLASTIC, ANTI-PERSONNEL "BUTTER-FLY MINES" - GREEN FOR VEGETATED AREAS, BROWN FOR DESERT TERRAIN AND BOTH PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE UNDER THE SNOW - THE RUSSIANS ARE CREATING FURTHER HAZARDS IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A 15-MILE-WIDE STRIP OF NO-MAN'S-LAND ALONG THE FRONTIER REGIONS OF NURISTAN, KONAR, PAKTIA AND OTHER PROVINCES. SOVIET TERROR HAS BEEN PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL, AS ATTESTED BY THE OVERFLOWING REFUGEE CAMPS AND THE MAINED VICTIMS IN THE PESHAWAR CLINIC.

APART FROM THE PARIS-BASED RELIEF GROUPS, WHICH ALSO INCLUDE ACTION INTERNATIONALE CONTRE LA FAIM (AICF),

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AFRANE AND MEDECINS DU MONDE, NO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
IN THE WEST HAVE SENT HUMANITARIAN AID DIRECTLY TO
AFGHANISTAN'S INHABITANTS, DESPITE REPORTS OF CONDITIONS
FAR MORE DISASTROUS THAN AMONG THE REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN.

DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS, THE FRENCH HAVE
ORGANIZED A NUMBER OF OVERLAND CARAVANS LOADED WITH FOOD,
CLOTHING AND MEDICATION INTO THE INTERIOR. IN ADDITION,
SEVERAL MEDICAL MISSIONS HAVE BEEN SENT IN WITH VOLUNTEER
DOCTORS TREATING ANYTHING FROM WAR INJURIES TO CHILD
ILLNESSES.

VIETNAM SYNDROME

7. OBSERVERS POINT TO THE DIPLOMATIC AND PHYSICAL
CONVENIENCE OF FURNISHING HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO PAKISTANI
REFUGEE CAMPS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER
AND THE RED CROSS AS BEING ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS
BEHIND THE WEST'S UNWILLINGNESS TO AID THE AFGHANS
DIRECTLY. ORGANIZING RELIEF EXPEDITIONS INTO AFGHANISTAN,
SOME REFUGEE OFFICIALS FEEL, WOULD ONLY EXPOSE THEM TO
COMMUNIST CHARGES OF "IMPERALIST INTERFERENCE."

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THE AFGHAN AUTHORITIES HAVE SO FAR STEADFASTLY REFUSED

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TO GRANT THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS ENTRY INTO THE COUNTRY TO INSPECT CONDITIONS.

8. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND NUMEROUS U.S. RELIEF AGENCIES CONTRIBUTED TO ROUGHLY HALF THE AFGHAN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN PAKISTAN LAST YEAR, THE SO-CALLED VIETNAM SYNDROME STILL APPEARS TO WEIGH ON U.S. CONSCIENCES

"AS MANY AMERICANS SEE IT," A U.S. DIPLOMAT IN GENEVA NOTED RECENTLY, "THE DEFINITION OF 'HUMANITARIAN AID' IS JUST TOO ELASTIC AND THEY DON'T WANT TO FIND THEMSELVES INVOLVED IN ANOTHER CONFLICT HALF WAY ACROSS THE WORLD."

9. VARIOUS EUROPEAN AND U.S. OBSERVERS HAVE CRITICIZED THE ATTITUDE OF THE WEST AS HYOCRITICAL. FRENCH RELIEF GROUPS HAVE STRESSED THE NEED FOR MULTINATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO THE AFGHANS. FUNDS IN PARTICULAR ARE SERIOUSLY LACKING.

"I WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE SITUATION INSIDE AFGHANISTAN AS DESPERATE," A FRENCH SPOKESMAN SAID. "IF THE AMERICANS OR OTHERS ARE NOT IN THE POSITION TO ORGANIZE DIRECT RELIEF THEMSELVES, THEN WE WOULD BE MORE WILLING TO COORDINATE OUR ACTIVITIES WITH THEM."

END TEXT. HELMAN

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